

Message Text

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45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14

ACDA-19 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CEA-02 STR-08

DRC-01 /170 W

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O R 021145Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3530

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2955

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: IMMINENT ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS

REF: ROME 2953

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AMMAN FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY; DIA FOR A2 AND DI5

1. FOLLOWING ROUND OF MEETINGS WITH PARTY SECRETARIES MARCH 1, WHICH DID NOT SUCCEED IN RELOVING DIFFERENCES, PRIME MINISTER RUMOR CONVENED COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR NOON TODAY, MARCH 2.

IT IS NOW COMMONLY ASSUMED THAT HE WILL FORMALLY ADVISE CABINET OF HIS DECISION TO RESIGN AND WILL THEREUPON PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO QUIRINALE TO SUBMIT RESIGNATION TO PRESIDENT LEONE. IN ACCORDANCE WITH LONG-ESTABLISHED TRADITION, LOENE WILL PROBABLY SPEND SEVERAL DAYS IN CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL FORMER PRESIDENTS AND PRIME MINISTERS AS WELL AS PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS BEFORE NAMING A PROSPECTIVE SUCCESSOR PRIME MINISTER. IN MEANTIME, PRESENT GOVERNMENT WILL REMAIN IN OFFICE IN CARETAKER STATUS. AT THIS POINT, MANY OBSERVERS EXPECT RUMOR TO BE OFFERED FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT.

2. GOVERNMENT CRISIS HAS COME SUDDENLY, AND WAS MANIFESTLY UNEXPECTED AND UNWANTED BY VIRTUALLY ALL CENTER-LEFT LEADERSHIP. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, (ROME 2871) PSI PARTY SECRETARY DE MARTINO WAS HIMSELF TAKEN BY SURPRISE AT LA MALFA'S PRECIPITIOUS RESIGNATION OVER ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES WITH SOCIALISTS. THESE DIFFERENCES HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY PAPERED OVER IN DECEMBER AND AGAIN IN EARLY FEBRUARY, IN COMMON RECOGNITION OF NEED TO KEEP COALITION ON ITS FEET IN FACE OF EXTREME ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND IMPENDING DIVORCE REFERENDUM. THROUGHOUT LIFE OF THIS GOVERNMENT, SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS HAVE ESPOUSED DIVERGENT ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHIES, WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS PLAYING MEDIATING ROLE RATHER THAN OPTING FOR ONE APPROACH OR THE OTHER. EXIT OF LA MALFA FROM GOVERNMENT AND CURRENT CRISIS NOW PUTS BURDEN SQUARELY ON CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS TO TAKE A CLEAR LINE ON ECONOMIC POLICY. DC DIRECTORATE MEETING SCHEDULED THIS EVENING TO DECIDE PARTY'S NEXT MOVES. DC SOURCE TELLS US THAT FANFANI ANXIOUS FOR SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF CRISIS IN VIEW OF GRAVE ECONOMIC SITUATION. VOLPE

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